6. Disafforestation. In my address to the members of the nineteenth session of the Assembly, I stated that, with a view to increase the area under paddy cultivation, the Government had ordered that blocks of swamps and other lands within reserved forests suitable for paddy cultivation should be thrown open for such cultivation without detriment to forest conservancy. In pursuance of this scheme, mixed committees of officials and non-officials, possessing local knowledge, were appointed in several taluks to list out suitable lands and the Government accepted most of the proposals of these committees. Since Kumbham, last year, orders have been issued, on the reports of the disafforestation committees appointed for the Changanachery and the Kottarakara taluks, for throwing open an area of 244 acres for registry. The total extent of lands so far thrown open, at the suggestion of the various committees, is 2,384 acres; and the Survey Department is now engaged in demarcating these areas, as also suitable belts of adjoining dry lands which are necessary for their beneficial enjoyment. The reports of the committees for the Pattanamtitta and the Todupuzha taluks have also been received and they are now under the scrutiny of the Government. It is under contemplation to appoint a similar committee for the Kunnattur taluk. On the recommendation of the Economic Development Board, another committee of officials and non-officials has been appointed to examine what portion of the extensive block of wet lands known as Mannavankandam situated in the Malayattur Reserve may be thrown open for cultivation, and whether, by harnessing the waters of the Deviyar which traverses this area, sufficient electricity may not be generated to work a rope-way for the transport of the produce to the plains.

7. Land Colonisation. The rules regulating the Land Colonisation Scheme, referred to in my two previous addresses, have now been issued in their final form, and some of the areas thrown open on the recommendation of the several disafforestation committees will, among other unregistered lands, be available for disposal under this scheme. The main objects of the scheme are, as I have stated on previous occasions, the meeting in some measure of the problem of middle class unemployment in the country and the encouragement of co-operative effort among the landless classes in the field of acquisition and improvement of land. Under the Land Colonisation Rules now issued, lands will be assigned either to syndicates composed ordinarily of middle class families and registered under the Companies Regulation, I of 1092, or to co-operative societies composed generally of poor and landless families and constituted under the Co-operative Societies Regulation. In the former case, the tenements will be of the order of ten acres per family, while, in the latter, they will be of that of one acre per family. In both alike, the concessionaires will have to live in the settlements and cultivate the lands themselves, though they may hire labour to help them. Lists of lands fit for assignment under the scheme have to be made out by local committees consisting of a strong non-official element and presided over by the Peishkar or the Commissioner, as the case may be, of each Division. The payment of *taravila* for such lands, which will ordinarily be fixed at Rs. 25 per acre for wet and Rs. 10 per acre for dry, may be spread over ten years and made in ten equal annual instalments, while the lands themselves will be wholly free from assessment during the first four years and will be subject to a fourth, a half and three-fourths of the assessment, respectively, during the next three years, the full assessment being payable only from the eighth year onwards. The advice of Governmental experts will be freely placed at the disposal of the colonists. Fifty per cent. of the assigned area should be brought under cultivation during the first four years and the balance within the next four years; and no alienation of the area will be valid for a period of twenty years except under the sanction of Government. Such are the features and such the advantages of this scheme which could, by judicious selection, be made applicable to a large area of suitable lands still available for cultivation in the State; and it lies with the youth of the country to work the scheme for all it is worth and to secure to themselves an independent and remunerative calling, while obtaining for their country an increased output of agricultural wealth.

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